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*THE CASTAWAYS OF THE
FLAG*

the mast. Her foresail and jib were
flawing as
the monotonous rolling shook her.

One of these men, holding the tiller
tucked under
His arm, tried to dodge the cruel swell
that rolled
the boat from side to side. He was a
sailor, about
forty years of age, thick-set and
sturdy, with a
frame of iron on which fatigue,
privation, even
despair, had never taken effect- An
Englishman
by nationality, this boatswain was
named John
Block.

The other man was barely eighteen,
and did not
seem to belong to the sea-faring class.

In the bottom of the boat, under the
poop and
seats, with no strength left to pull the
oars, a
number of human beings were lying,,
among them a
child of five years old—a poor little
creature whose
whimpering was audible, whom its
mother tried to
hush with idle talk and kisses.

Before the mast, upon the poop and
near the
jib stays, two people sat motionless
and silent,
hand in hand, lost in the moat gloomy
thoughts*

So intense was the darkness that it was
only by the
Eghtning flashes that they could see
each other*

From the bottom of the boat a head
was Mfted
sometimes, only to droop again at once.

The boatswain spoke to the young
man lying by
His side.

"No, no. I watched the horizon until
the sun
went down. No land in sight—not a
sail! But*